

INDEX TO VOLUME II.

Contributions :—

	PAGES,
Abode of God—G. S. K.	38
Ahankara—G. S. K.	81
Basis for Psychic or Spiritual Research—J. J. G.	83
The Beach—A Sanyasin	21, 32
Bhakti—V. R. Goray	119
Farewell	135
Fate Inevitable—R. S. Mukharji	138
The Glory of Love—S. Venkataramaiya	115
Heroism of a Missionary's Life	41
—Siri E. Swanander	41
Isvara and Brahman—J. J. G.	18
Kumaun—A Traveller in the Himalayas	30, 45
Leaves from the Gospel of the Lord Sri Rama-krishna—M.	100
Our Late Editor—G. S. K.	133
Our Religions Differences—R. A. K.	84
Pantheism and Vedanta—J. J. G.	54
Real Faith—L. N. J.	91
Saved and Lost—J. J. G.	32
Science, Religion, Truth—Siri E. Swanander	110
Some Reasons for the Superiority of Vedanta over other systems—Kanno Mal, B. A.	31
Theodora, A Story—H.	77
The Voice of Gentle Stillness—Yogananda	80
Who is the Real Chandala?—L. N. J.	127

Correspondence :—

G. B. Laghate	96
Hari Charan Das Datt	119

Editorials :—

Faith	30
Freewill or Fatalism	43
The Glory of Suicide	47
A Great Superstition	123
Is the World Real or False?	75, 87
Karma and Freedom	123
Karma-Yoga	1
Man, his littleness and his Greatness	1
Vedanta and the Emperor of Emperors	11
The War	54

Elements of Vedanta :—

Chapter VI, The self in us	11
---------------------------------	----

Extracts :—

Freedom of the Soul—Swami Vivekananda	13
Influence of the Spiritual Thoughts of India in England—Miss Margaret Noble	127
Is Vedantism Pessimistic?—Swami Vivekananda	28
Karma-Upanishad—Charles Johnston	83
Lord Buddha—Swami Vivekananda	4

Loss of the Soul—Borderland ....	... 48
On Mann—Henry David ....	... 129
Our Duty—The present Sri Sankaracharya	113, 125
The Philosophy of the Atman and the Soul—Swami Vivekananda	78
Privilege—Swami Vivekananda ....	... 19
Re-incarnation—David Bank Sickels ....	... 96
Self and the Eternal—Charles Johnston ....	... 139
Sankara, Teacher of India—do ....	... 58
Steps to Realization—Miss S. E. Waldo ....	... 55
The Sympathy of Religions—Swami Saradananda	55
Take up the Sword ....	... 26
A Truly Holy Life—Journal of the Mahabodhi Society ....	... 131
Vedanta—Swami Vivekananda ....	... 61
Yajnavalkya and Maitreyi—do, ....	... 143
Imitation of Vyasa : ....	... 37, 50, 74, 121
Meditations of a Mauni or Manana Mala :	49, 73, 85
109, 121	
Miscellaneous :—	...
End of Desire—Nobody-knows-who ....	... 94
Extent of my Dominion—do ....	... 117
Glory of Mental Worship—A Recluse ....	... 34
Goodness is Happiness ....	... 122
How Rāmādās saw God ....	... 5
Life of Saint Vāyilār—A Recluse ....	... 18
Life of Tatwarāya Swami—do ....	... 142
The Missing Tenth—A Recluse ....	... 57
Monism, qualified and pure—Nobody-knows-who ....	... 53
An Old Man and Sri Krishna ....	... 12
Radha and Krishna or the Confessions of an Honest God ....	... 44
The Secret of Death, A Story ....	... 5
Time how for Real ....	... 20
Wilderness of Life—Nobody-knows-who ....	... 122
Pitfalls in the Vedanta :—	
The World an Illusion ....	... 54
Seekers after God :—	
i. Sri Alavandār ....	... 28, 41, 55
iv. Jayadeva Swami ....	... 79, 90
Thoughts on the Bhagavad Gita	10, 18, 81, 92, 113, 120
Translations :—	
Maitareyi Upanishad ....	... 11
Krishna Karnāmitam ....	... 56
True Greatness or Vasudeva Sastry, A Novel by T. C. Natarajan	22, 35, 47, 60, 95, 117, 130

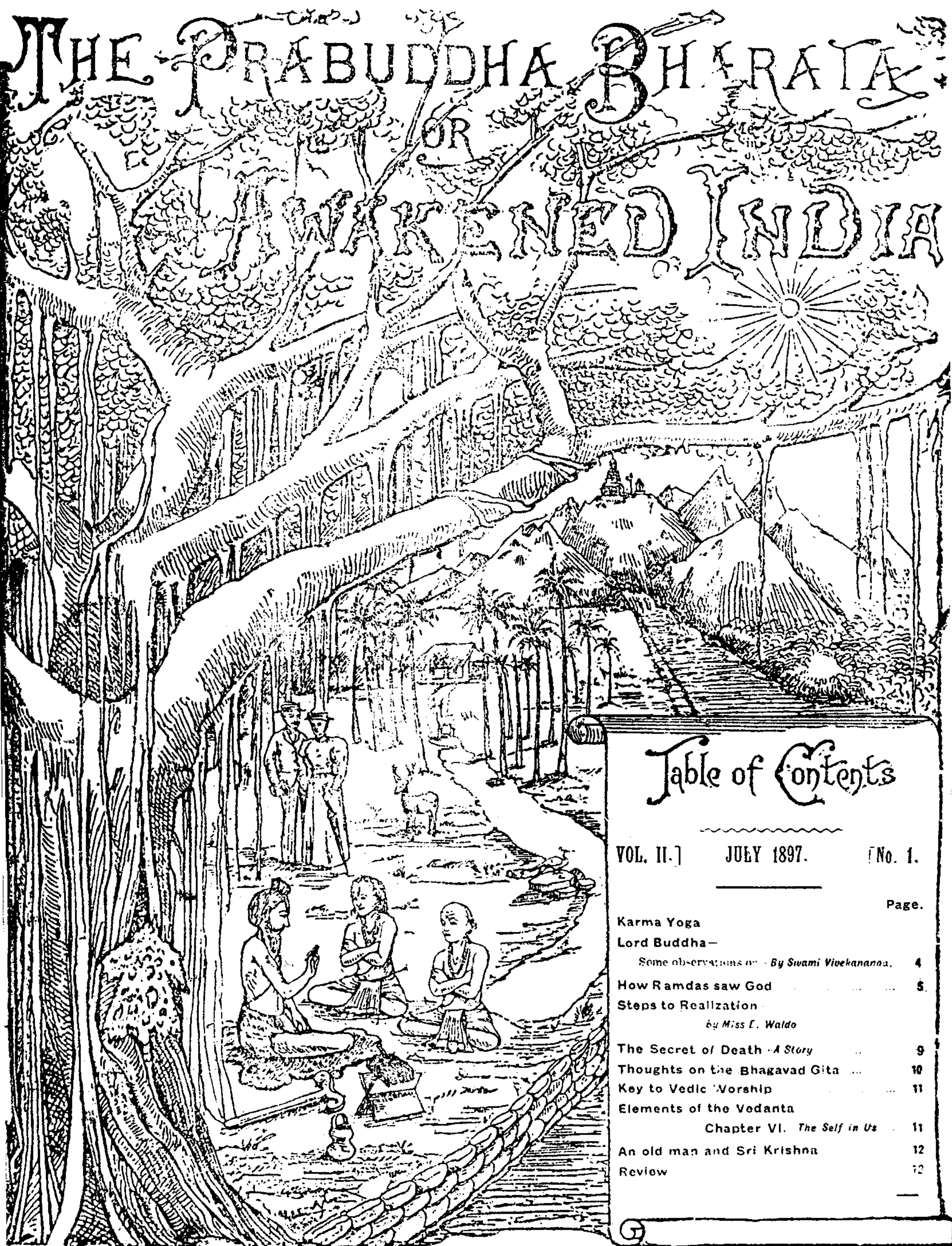
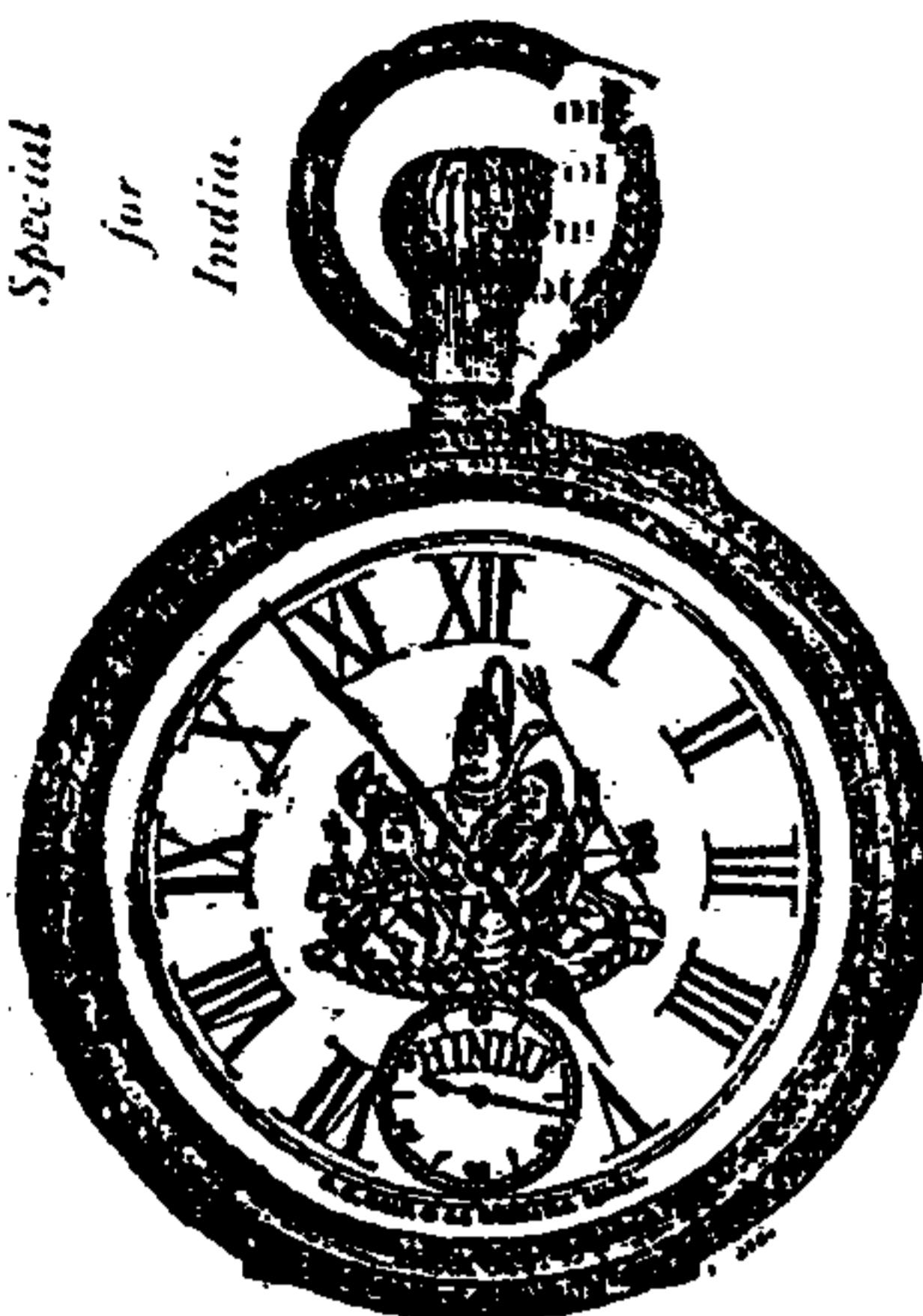


Table of Contents

VOL. II.]	JULY 1897.	[No. 1.
<hr/>		
Page.		
Karma Yoga		
Lord Buddha—		
Some observations on - By Swami Vivekananda.	4	
How Ramdas saw God		
Steps to Realization		
by Miss E. Waldo		
The Secret of Death - A Story		9
Thoughts on the Bhagavad Gita		10
Key to Vedic Worship		11
Elements of the Vedanta		
Chapter VI. The Self in Us		11
An old man and Sri Krishna		12
Review		12

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Karma Yoga.

To remove our ignorance, to open our eyes now blind-folded by Maya, and lead us back to the fountain of bliss, our own Inner Self, is the purpose of all the scriptures of the world, and has been the one endeavour of the great sages who, by their lives and teachings, blessed our sad planet. The lives of these latter were all voluntarily dedicated to the service of suffering humanity, and all of them have uniformly striven to draw us nearer and nearer the centre of our being. With this glorious and unselfish end in view, they have clearly marked out for us the road to salvation, and also indicated the milestones in that road, the successive stages through which the spirit progresses towards its goal. Especially in our country, the idea of there being a something beyond this world of change and suffering, this penal colony as it has been styled, is presented to us at every turn in life, in marriage, in our daily observances, in funeral ceremonies. *Sraddhas*, nay, even eating for the satisfaction of our hunger, the Varahopanishad says, should be looked upon as a sort of worship of the Atman within.

Indeed, in few countries has the evolution of the soul been traced from its earliest starting point to its final destination so fully as in ours; and nowhere else has the path for liberation been indicated with so much clearness. That path has in our books been divided into four sections, the first of which is called Karma Yoga, the second Bhakti Yoga, the third Raja Yoga and the fourth and the last Gnana Yoga. Yoga means the path or method whereby the soul attains its union with the Supreme. These four Yogas are sometimes also called four feet. Of these, Karma Yoga is the first from the bottom; it is the first rung in the ladder to Heaven, for it is farthest from the ideal, *viz.*, the cessation of all

sense of duality and consequently of all action. Karma Yoga, rightly practised, leads to Bhakti Yoga; which in its turn leads on to Raja Yoga; which last gradually brings us Gnana or wisdom, the realisation of one-ness with the Brahman who alone really exists. A sense of difference is the very life of action, for all action implies a doer, a deed different from the doer and an object or instrument of action different from both; but says the Sruti, 'Those who believe in duality are not masters of their own selves and go to perishable regions, while he who realises the reverse becomes his own king.' There is duality in Bhakti Yoga also, *i. e.*, in the earlier stages, but bhakti lessens the restlessness of the mind and proportionately destroys the illusion of manifoldness, for the bhakta sees only the Lord of his love in all the universe. Bhakti Yoga is thus higher than Karma Yoga while Raja Yoga is superior to even the former, for it is a conscious effort at union with the Deity which, during its fulfilment, forms what is called Gnana Yoga. The course of evolution thus begins with Karma Yoga and ends with Gnana Yoga. That this is so, not merely stands to reason, but is also the opinion of the scriptures, as may be seen from verses 8 to 11 of Chap. XII of the Bhagavad Gîtâ.

It is not however for a moment asserted that Karma ceases as soon as Bhakti begins, and Bhakti as soon as Yoga, and that Karma, Bhakti and Yoga are all absent in the gnani. For, as we have already seen that the gnani is the best Karma Yogi and that thoroughly motiveless action is possible only in the case of the gnani. So in the case of Bhakti also, the highest or Para Bhakti is, as we have seen in a previous number, very nearly equal to wisdom, so much so that Sankara has defined Bhakti in his Vivekachintamani as meditation on one's own Self. Again the words Yogi and Gnani are indiscriminately used for each other in several passages of the Upanishads and the

Gita. Karma, Bhakti, Yoga and Gnana do not therefore mutually exclude each other. On the other hand, every Yoga is a fulfilment of the preceding one. Bhakti is the fulfilment of Karma, Yoga of Bhakti and Karma, and Gnana of all the preceding three. What is meant then by saying that these four Yogas are distinct divisions of the trunk road to release is only that Karma or action is predominant in Karma Yoga, Bhakti in Bhakti Yoga and so on. Every Yoga is named after the element which is predominant in it.

The question may be asked, why these four Yogas? The reply is, because the Vedanta philosophy is universal and covers the whole ground of human evolution. One method will not suit all men. 'Some men have mystic tendencies; they must realise God by means of inner searching, by examining into the nature of mind in all its workings. Others are of emotional tendencies and must adopt devotional methods; they must concretise their ideals in a Personal God. Others are philosophers pure and simple; to them the idea of dependence upon a Being outside of themselves does not appeal, and reason and sheer force of will alone can help them. Lastly, there are men who require activity in order to make progress and for them is the Science of Karma Yoga.'

Although the germs of Karma Yoga are contained in the Upanishads, and although it is a natural inference from the lessons which they inculcate, yet we owe it to the genius of Sri Krishna that action which is a necessity of our nature has been shown, if performed properly, to go a great way towards liberating us from the thralldom of Maya. The Bhagavad Gita is the book on Karma Yoga, and no where else do we find the path of action indicated with so much of clearness and beauty. Indeed it was Sri Krishna who elevated action to the dignity of a Yoga.

The Karma Yoga of the Gita should not however be confounded with what is known as Karma Marga, as opposed to Gnana Marga, which is sometimes styled Dhuma Marga, the smoke-filled path, by which performers of sacrifices and other rituals enjoined in the Karma Khanda of the Vedas, the Purva Mimamsa and the Smritis based upon them, attain to celestial regions such as the world of gods, the world of the forefathers, and so on. The Karma Yoga of the Vedanta means the path whereby one progresses towards liberation by the proper performance of the work that comes to hand. Karma in the latter has a much broader sense than in the former. In its broadest sense in which it is often used in the Gita, it applies to any kind of activity either of body, mind or the senses, as Sankara says in his commentary on verse IV, 18. More specifically, it means duty or work in which one engages. In the term Karma Marga, on the other hand, it denotes Vedic sacrifices and rituals by which one secures the right for entering higher and higher worlds of enjoyment after death. The Karma Yoga of the Gita brings

about purity of mind, and through it wisdom; Karma of the Karmakhanda is Kamyā, i.e., for the gratification of desires, while Karma in the Gita is Nishkāmyā, i.e., free from desire and motiveless.

'O Arjuna', says Sri Krishna, 'Kamyā Karma is much lower than Nishkāmyā Karma; therefore take thou to the latter which leads to wisdom. Those who desire for fruit feel miserable' (Gita 11, 49). Action, as we have already seen, can never give us liberation.

Perfection,' says Swami Vivekananda, 'can never be attained by work. We may work through all eternity, but there will be no way out of this maze; you may work on and on and on, but there will be no end.' 'Wise men,' says the Naradaparivrajikopanishad, 'escape death by knowing the Brahman. There is no other road to salvation.' That even Vedic sacrifices are no better than other Karma in procuring us our salvation is clearly expressed in the following verses of the Mundaka Upanishad:—

'Perishable and transient are verily the eighteen supporters of the sacrifice on whom, it is said, the inferior work (Kamyā Karma) depends. The fools who consider this work as the highest, undergo again even decay and death. In the midst of ignorance, fools fancying themselves wise and learned, go round and round, oppressed by misery, as blind people led by the blind. Living in various ways in ignorance, youths imagine, we have obtained our end. Because the performers of work from attachment are not wise, therefore suffering unhappiness, they lose heaven, when the fruit of their works has become nought. Fancying oblations and pious gifts to be the highest, fools do not know anything good. Having enjoyed the fruit of their works on the high place of heaven which they gained by their actions, they enter again this world or one that is lower' (I, II, 7-11). Then the Upanishad proceeds to say, 'Let the Brahmana, after he has examined the worlds gained by works, renounce the world, reflecting that there is nothing that is not created, all being the effect of work. For the purpose of knowing that (which is not created), he approaches, sacred wool in his hand, a teacher who knows the Vedas and who is solely devoted to Brahman.'

To go to the teacher, and that with the senses subdued and mind at rest, as required in the next verse of the above Upanishad, is however not possible for most men. Many there are who, though aware of the insufficiency of work, are yet too active and *rajasic* in their character and are by the principles in their nature, bound 'to be up and doing,' like Arjuna to whom Krishna said, 'O son of Kunti, thou that art bound by past Karma and the duties of thy order art going to fight even against thy will, as one compelled to do so' (Gita XVIII, 60). It is for such men that Karma Yoga is meant. It will raise them a step nearer the ideal which they are unable to approach by any other means.

'In this world,' says Sri Krishna, 'there is nothing so purifying as Gnana ; but the Karma Yogi realises for himself that Atma Gnana in course of time' (*Gitâ*, IV, 38). Karma Yoga then stands midway between Karma Marga and Gnana Marga. Karma of the Karma Marga not only does not liberate man but binds him more and more, for it creates newer and newer desires while the practice of Karma Yoga kills out desire, and secures emancipation from the thrall of Mâyâ. Says the *Gitâ* "The Karma Yogi attains the release which comes of wisdom by leaving off desire for the fruits of action, while he who being prompted by desire is attached to them becomes bound." (V. 12).

Two elements are indispensably required in Karma Yoga—non-attachment or indifference to the fruits of action, and dedication of the work to God. Krishna says to Arjuna, 'O Dhananjaya, do thy duty with thy mind fixed upon the Lord, leaving off all attachment and without caring for the fruits of thy action. Equanimity of mind whatever may be the consequences of one's action—this is what is called (Karma) Yoga' (*Gitâ*, II, 48). Both these elements are necessary and great is the virtue of action performed with utter indifference to results and dedicated to the Lord. "That which is done as Nishkamya Karma will never be vain : there can be no harm caused by it. Even a small portion of the virtue of such Karma will enable man to overcome much fear" (*Gitâ*, II, 40). Karma Yoga then though the first of the four Yogas is productive of wonderful results. Indeed, when two such elements combine as non-attachment and a feeling of worship, what doubt is there that the result will be glorious?

In the first place, non-attachment brings about freedom from grief and fear ; attachment is the first child of Mâyâ and nearly all the misery of the world is directly due to it. To be non-attached is to be fearless. Bhartrihari says, 'Everything in the world is fraught with fear. It is non-attachment that makes one fearless.' A man who works unattached is above grief and fear. Secondly, as the Karma Yogi dedicates his work to God, he approaches nearer and nearer the centre of his being his inner Self. The God-idea gradually grows upon him, until he realises that he, as a member of the phenomenal world, is simply an instrument in the hands of God, that it is God that speaks through the universe. A steady practice of Karma Yoga will enable a man to say with Thayumanavar, 'Everything is thy property, O God; everything is Thy doing ; Thou pervadest the whole universe' ; and he will realise the meaning of the celebrated verses of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, which describe the glory of the Antaryamin, the 'Inner Ruler, immortal,' such as, 'He who dwelling in the mind is within the mind, whom the mind does not know, whose body is the mind, who from within rules the mind, is thy Soul, the Inner Ruler, immortal.' (*Bri. Upa.*, III, vii). It has been well said

'Prudent men abandoning the fruits of action attain wisdom and obtaining release from the bonds of life reach that state which is free from grief.' (*Gitâ*, II, 51).

It is in the nature of all Karma to destroy *Tamas*, laziness and the like, but Nishkamya Karma gradually kills out *rajas* also, for, as non-attachment and worship form its elements, it is the best antidote for pride and selfishness. True *Satvic* humility characterises such Karma, and it is only this Karma which can be properly said to involve self-sacrifice. For, however glorious may be the work which one might perform, if he does it with a sense of self-consciousness and pride or with motives such as fame, there is no sacrifice of self but propitiation, and it is much inferior to ordinary Nishkamya Karma, not to speak of such a memorable act as that of Emperor Civi who cut off flesh from his own thigh to save a pigeon, or that of the rishi Dadhichi who gladly gave his backbone to Indra who asked for it. 'Ordinary Karma is much lower,' says Krishna, 'than that which is Nishkamya' (II, 49).

The great Bhishmacharya of the *Mahabharata*¹¹ was a wonderful example of a Karma-Yogi. The story of his resigning his throne and taking the Brahmacharya vow for the sake of his father and step-brothers is too well-known to need mention here. Before the great war, he took hold of every possible opportunity to advise Duryodhana to make peace with the Pandavas. He told him, times without number, that his cause was unjust and would not succeed, and that not even gods could resist the Pandavas in battle. That obstinate and evil-minded prince heeded not his words however, and often charged him with being partial to the Pandavas. The battle of Kurukshetra was the result, and though Bhishma had, till the very eve of battle, pleaded for the Pandavas, yet when duty called him, he fought better than all the rest together, causing immense havoc among the Pandava army. Yet he had no enmity against the Pandavas or attachment to the Kauravas ; fighting as he did was in his eyes a duty and being called upon to perform it, he did so as a true Karma Yogi without attachment and without caring for the results. Even his death was, as it were, due to his sense of duty. He died because the situation required it, because he thought he was bound to die. How he gladly brought about his own death will, though well known, bear repetition here. In a war council held in the Pandava camp Yudhishtira proposed to consult Bhishma himself as to how they may obtain victory over the Kauravas. Bhishma had told him 'I will give thee counsel, but fight I shall never for thee, since I shall have to fight for Duryodhana's sake.' Dharmaputra's proposal was approved, and accordingly Krishna and the Pandavas went to the grand old man and asked him, 'Tell us, O grandsire, the means by which we may vanquish thee in battle, by which sovereignty may be ours ; and, by which our army may not have to undergo such destruction as you an-

now causing'. The great Bhishma replied, 'As long as I am alive, victory cannot be yours. Truly do I say this unto you. After however I am vanquished in fight, you may have victory in the battle. If therefore you desire victory in the battle, smite me down without delay. I give you permission, ye sons of Pandu, strike me as you please. After I am slain all the rest will be slain. Therefore do as I bid.' Then he frankly told them that he would be killed by Arjuna fighting against him placing Sikhandin in the front. Really a remarkable incident this! Our poor world has not seen many such heroes as Bhishma who would lay down their lives purely out of a sense of duty. Because he had promised to give counsel to the Pandavas, he gladly told them, when they asked him, how he himself might be killed!

Though such 'man-mountains' are not met with in modern days, our ancient literature abounds in instances of heroic self-sacrifice. For were not Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, Janaka, Sita, Krishna, Buddha and others mighty Karma Yogis? One thing common to these heroes is spirituality. By spirituality is not here meant any adherence to doctrines, to narrow theological dogmas and beliefs, but a strong faith in something beyond this world of selfishness and hate, a contempt for earthly life and prosperity and an incapacity for meanness. The world was nothing in their eyes, and they lived wedded, as it were, to eternity. It is this spirituality which was the secret of their heroism. They were great Karma Yogis because they had strength of character and an unshakeable faith in the supreme—not like the little worms that we are, crawling on earth with no better ambition than to hoard up its dust and no better occupation than to steal, fight and kill. The sage of Chelsea is perfectly right when he says, 'The question between man and man always is, will you kill me or shall I kill you?' Mean and petty scrambling for the propitiation of our false self as if there is nothing higher than that—this is our lot. But those great men of old moved in a world much higher than ours; they loved each other even when fighting and readily sacrificed themselves for the sake of duty. All this they did because they never lost sight of the 'Star above the storm.'

Without this element of spirituality, Karma Yoga is impossible. 'To work for work's sake, without motives, is all very well in words, but when one begins to follow it in practice then the difficulty will be present. That is why in almost every verse of the Gita which speaks of Karma Yoga, both the elements—non-attachment and the sense of worship—are combined. Indeed, the first is almost impossible without the second, for the mind is unable to leave off desire unless it recognises the existence of something better than the things it desires. Absolute non-attachment is an impossible condition. The mind can leave hold of lower things only if it is sufficiently attracted by higher things. Service of man and worship

of God should therefore go hand in hand until they become one and identical. It has been wisely observed, 'Service on the physical plane is good; service on the mental or psychic plane is better: the altruistic effort involved in both requires the impulse of the higher worship as a goad.' The absence of this impulse robs the Karma Yoga of Buddhism (not the Buddhism of modern days) of half its worth and makes it nearly impracticable. Besides, it is an immense advantage that we are, as in our system, reminded of God at every turn in the course of our evolution.

Not merely is Nishkâmya Karma of advantage to the individual, but even as work, it will be much better than that which is done with motives. That work is the best which contains in it the least quantity of personal equation. He is the best actor, for example, who, for the time being, identifies himself with the part he is playing. The greatest works of art were executed by men who forgot themselves in the work. He is the best musician who loses his little self while singing. All high work is impersonal and spiritual, being free from the considerations of self and the hankering after results.

Nishkâmya Karma is therefore the best Karma. It very much helps the individual's growth and at the same time brings about the greatest results. But he who attempts to practise Karma Yoga because it is so beneficial, is not a Karma Yogi, for he works with motive. 'Honesty is the best policy, but he who acts on that principle is not an honest man' is the saying. In the same way, Nishkâmya Karma is the best Karma and brings about most marvellous results; but he who attempts to do such Karma because it is so, is not a Karma Yogi and cuts the ground under his own feet.

Lord Buddha.

(SOME OBSERVATIONS ON—By SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.)

(In the course of a lecture delivered in Detroit, U. S. A., the Swami Vivekananda made the following reference to Lord Buddha—

In every religion we find one type of manhood particularly developed. The type of working without motive is most highly developed in Buddhism. (Do not mistake Buddhism and Brahmanism. In this country you are very apt to do so. Buddhism is one of our sects. It was founded by a great man called Gautama, who became disgusted at the eternal metaphysical discussions of his day, and the cumbersome rituals. And more especially he was disgusted with the caste system. Some people say that we are born to a certain state, and therefore we are superior to others who are not thus born. He was also disgusted with the tremendous priesthood. He preached a religion in which there was no motive power, and was perfectly agnostic about metaphysics or theories.) He was often asked, 'Is there a God, sir?' and he answered, 'I do not know; I did not tell you that.' 'Then what shall I do?' He would reply, 'Do good and be good. There came live

Brahmins, they were discussing among themselves, and they asked him to settle their discussion. One said, "Sir, my book says that God is such and such, and that this is the way to come to God." Another said, "That is wrong, for my book says such and such, and this is the way to come to God," and so on. He listened to all of them calmly; and then asked them one by one, "Does any one of your books say that God becomes angry, that He ever injures any one, that He is impure?" "No, sir, they all teach that God is pure." "Then, my friends, why do you not become pure and good first, and then you will know what God is." Of course I do not endorse all his philosophy. I want a good deal of metaphysics for myself. I entirely differ in many respects, but, because we differ, is that any reason why we should not see the beauty of the man? That is the only man who was bereft of all motive powers. (There were other great men,—Krishna, for instance, a great prophet—who all said they were the incarnations of God Himself, and "if you believe in me you will go to heaven," and what did this man (Buddha) say with his dying breath? "None can help you; help yourself; work out your own salvation." And he says about himself, that what is meant by Buddha (Buddha is a state just as with Jesus "Jesus the Christ") is this—"Buddha is the name of infinite knowledge, infinite as the sky; I, Gautama, have reached that; so you will all reach & struggle for that." Bereft of all motive power, did not want to go to heaven, did not want money; he gave up money and his throne and everything, and went about begging his bread through the streets of India, preaching for the good of men and animals and—everything, with a heart as wide as the ocean. He was the only one who was ever ready to give up his life for animals, to stop a sacrifice. He once said to a king, "If the sacrifice of a lamb helps you to go to heaven, sacrificing a man will help you better, so sacrifice me." The king was astonished, and yet this man was without any motive power. He stands as the perfection of the active type, and the very height to which he attained shows that through the power of work we can also attain to the greatest height. But to many the path becomes easier if they believe in God. But he would not even have anything to do with God, with religion, or with metaphysics, showing that even the man who does not believe in anything—has no metaphysics, does not go to any church, or sect, or temple, is an openly confessed materialist—can attain to the highest. We have no right to judge him. I wish I had one inchite part of Buddha's heart and work. He may or may not have believed in God; that does not matter to me. He reached the same state of perfection to which others will come by Bhakti—love of God, Yoga or Gnana. Perfection does not come from belief or faith. Talk does not count for anything. Parrots can do that.)

HOW RAMDAS SAW GOD.

There was in recent times a great Vaishnavite Bhakta by name Ramdas. He was very anxious to obtain a vision of God. It so happened that, while he was sitting one evening with a number of devotees in a grove, where he had made a feast that day to a large number of Brahmins, he heard the soft melodies of a Bhakta who was singing the praises of the Lord. He at once proceeded in the direction of the voice, and finding that it was no less a personage than the celebrated Kabirdas, who was so singing, at once fell at his feet. After

the usual salutations and enquiries were over, Ramdas requested Kabir to initiate him into the mysteries of Yogas. Kabir gladly complied with the request and for some days he stayed in the grove as a guest of Ramdas.

Shortly after, Ramdas again approached Kabir and requested to be favoured with a vision of God. Kabir promised a daylight one and asked his disciple to arrange for a grand feast for Brahmins as a preparation for the appearance of the Lord. The feast was accordingly arranged, grand preparations were made on every side and the whole town of Badrachalam, where Ramdas lived, decorated for the reception of God. Numberless Brahmins had assembled and the dinner which in sumptuousness outdid even their expectations was ready awaiting the arrival of God. Twelve o'clock was the hour arranged for the vision, but one o'clock and two o'clock and even three o'clock passed away, but the Lord did not appear. Ramdas began to doubt the sincerity of Kabir and the Brahmins impatient, as a rule, of hunger, and now very angry with the Lord who stood between them and their dinner, complained in no murmurs.

While thus suspense was growing into disappointment, a wild buffalo, all dirty and covered over with mire, rushed into the grove and began to roll its noisy person over the heap of food that had been stored up in tempting abundance. It upset the pots containing ghee, milk, soup and other things and made a thorough bear-garden of the whole dinner. All the food became spoiled and the angry Brahmins and the mortified Ramdas, seeing the mess which the dirty creature was making, surrounded it on all sides and beat it till the blood came, branded it on several parts of the body and then drove it away. All the feast being thus spoiled, fresh rice was brought and cooked and the Brahmins fed but, of course, not in the grand style originally designed. For this disappointment they were very severe on poor Ramdas, cursed him with all their heart and went home in no pleasant mood. Ramdas himself was filled with shame at having been thus duped by a Fakir. In the meanwhile, the buffalo went to Kabir who seeing the scars on its body and the blood which was still oozing from its wounds was filled with grief and exclaiming, "O God, is this the treatment you received?" began to apply medicine to its wounds, but the buffalo said—it was God Himself who went to Ramdas in the form of a buffalo—"This is the treatment which Ramdas, to whom I went at your request, gave me. You need not grieve however, as it is nothing by the wounds with which my body was covered in the battle with Ravana" and took leave from him. In the evening, Ramdas came to Kabir with an angry face; but his anger gave way to grief when he learned how God had come and gone and with what sort of treatment. Sago Kabir then told Ramdas how everything in the universe was really God and how the Bhakta should recognise God not only in the temple but in everything one sees, for there is nothing outside the Lord. So says the Yajnavalkya Upanishad. "One should know that God is in everything and worship the horse, the Chandala, the cow, the ass and every other thing, falling on the ground before them like a tree."

The greatest characteristic of a truly great man or a man, next to absolute unselfishness, is humility; and with humility we must couple simplicity, for the one is born of the other.—J. W. TRICE.

As one can ascend the top of a house by means of a ladder, or a bamboo, or a staircase, or a rope, so divers are the ways and means to approach God; and every religion in the world shows one of these ways.

Steps to Realization.

(By Miss E. WALDO.)

Every being is essentially divine, from the moneron to man. All are manifestations of the One Existence. Behind everything that we see, or know, or think, or even imagine is that one infinite ocean of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, that alone makes possible the known universe. A tiny drop of that ocean, as it were, gets caught in the network of time, space and causation and forms this world of experience. We can all see the world around us, the world of endless variety, of ceaseless change. No one dreams of denying that this world is a fact in our consciousness. Having then this world clearly before us, the problem arises, how explain the existence of this wonderful universe. In the West, man has set to work with infinite patience to seek the solution of this problem by examining the seen, the tangible and so endeavoring by careful study of them, to reach an understanding of their origin. Every branch of study has been most carefully, most laboriously pursued. The so-called sciences are a numerous family, and the discoveries made in each have been most wonderful. In all these diverse researches, in all the divergent conclusions reached, there has yet been a certain harmony. On one thing, every student is agreed. Underlying all that man can see, or know, is what is called law. This law is manifested in different ways, and man has not yet begun to grasp its working, he has only come to plainly perceive its existence. The first great law, under which all the rest may be grouped is the law of causation, the law that every effect must have a cause. The human brain is utterly unable to form any concept of an effect that had no cause, or of a cause with no effect. This endless, and beginningless sequence conditions all man's thinking, and the great German philosopher Kant showed clearly that it was inherent in the very nature of man's thinking capacity. So nearly allied to this inevitable idea of causation as to practically form a trinity with it, come the ideas of space and time. As little as we can conceive an effect without a cause, just as little can we conceive any effect that occurs nowhere and at no time. As soon as the human mind tries to form such a concept, it finds out the impossibility of doing it, and any state of existence beyond this apparently impossible barrier seems to the ordinary thinker an impossible dream. Yet we have the record of many great souls, in many different lands and of widely diverse creeds, who unhesitatingly claim to have arrived at a state that transcended the hard and fast laws that govern the working of man's mind. Of course objection can be taken and the assertion made that these statements are not true. I once heard an eminent archaeologist say that the fact that one fossil remain had been found by one man in any given locality, outweighed in value the testimony of a million people who might have walked there before him and not seen any such thing. He said the trained eye, and the disciplined mind and the learning of the student of archaeology gave him such an immense advantage over the ordinary observer, that it was almost like comparing the faculties of a blind man with those of one of unimpaired power of vision, to expect the one to see what would most plainly appear to the other. If this can be so forcibly asserted of the realm of the seen, how much more must it be true of the realm of mind! The testimony from so many sources as to a state above and beyond ordinary sense-perception, is at least worthy of consideration. In different countries and in different centuries, men who never even heard

of each other, bear testimony to having reached that state. It has been called by many names, usually being regarded as union with the Divine, or God. The Hindus call it by a higher name, they call it *Realization*. By this they mean that it is not a vision of a God either without or within, who is separate from the soul having that vision, but that it is the awareness of the human soul that it is itself that God, that there is but one Soul or Self and that all that appears as variety, is still that one Self seen through name and form, or in other words, through limitation. Having thus clearly apprehended what the term *realization* means, we can consider the question as to how it can be arrived at. To many this is a question of absorbing interest, while to a vastly larger number it appears the vainest and most visionary of all inquiries. To the student of Vedânta it is of paramount importance, because realization is the end and aim of every effort, the one thing to be desired, and the whole Vedânta philosophy resolves itself into the effort to teach man how this goal can be attained. In giving some distinct and positive directions for procedure, Vedânta also tells us plainly that there are endless other ways of accomplishing the same result. As realization is a matter of individual experience, all that any one, however great, can do for us, is to point the way or give such clues to the path as will guide us in the search, but every human being has to tread the road, step by step, just as he has to breathe for himself, eat for himself, live and die for himself. The greatest power conceivable cannot give us the desired result. The wildest dream of science never imagines that a way can be devised for one human being to breathe for another. Neither can one soul realize for another. But the soul which has reached the goal itself can be of the greatest possible help to another who is still struggling towards it.

What then is the message of these great ones? Their message constitutes what we call the scriptures, or word of God. Not any special book, the bible, quoran, veda or any other, is meant by these scriptures. All the teachings of all the great souls who have reached liberation, and then for a while renouncing the blessing, return in order to help others, are worthy to be called *scriptures*. The homage that is paid to these books of religion in all lands proves how instinctively the human mind has recognized their value and importance. No power of any sovereign the world over saw would be great enough to take any ordinary book and raise it to the same level of veneration. Because man is naturally so constituted that he must strive to pierce beyond the seuses, and because he believes that those whose words these "sacred books" record had done so, he is forced to pay reverence to them. And history tells us this has ever been the case, and it will ever be the case with the majority of mankind. These so-called revelations of God's will, are the guide posts to the goal we fain would reach, but we need to guard against the mistake of supposing that the guide post is the goal, that because it points out one road, there are not many many other roads, some of which are marked by other guide posts, while some are just faint foot paths, beaten out by adventurous and ardent souls who felt constrained to advance at any hazard, and so had to force a road for themselves. Vedânta philosophy tells those who study it that amid all the endless varieties of men, we may group them by their most prominent tendencies, under four heads. These divisions are not final, as a man might perhaps be found who would come nearly equally correctly under two or more of these. We

will then clearly understand that these four groups of men are but a very general classification of mankind as a whole. Looked at thus broadly, it may be said that some men seek active work, like to be planning and striving to devise some means of helping their fellow men. Nearly all ethical societies have this aim. Some wish to decide on the best means of alleviating the physical conditions around them, to give the poor more comfortable homes, more wages and an easier, happier life. Others wish to educate the masses, to lift them mentally and morally to a more exalted idea of life. Men with these tendencies are classed by Vedânta philosophy under the head of *workers*. It does not in the least matter what particular religious belief they profess, or even if they have none at all. They have in common the one idea that they must do something to help their fellow men, and that makes workers of them. For such as these Vedânta teaches Karma Yoga, or the true method of work. If we are to help and not hinder, we need to understand what we are trying to do. Of primary importance is it, for us to be perfectly honest with ourselves and look our motives squarely in the face. Why do we seek to help our fellow men? Are we sure it is for their good, or do we really intend to reap some advantage for ourselves. He who would be a Karma yogin, or follower of the method of work for its own sake, must make clear to his own mind what he is trying to do. Otherwise he will work to no purpose, he will be like the ox in the treadmill, ever tramping round and round, grinding out the oil and ending exactly where he began. To work to advantage, we must learn the secret of work and this is no easy task. The ideal we have to set before us is entire unselfishness. This is precisely as much the ideal of utilitarian ethics as of intuitionist ethics. The sanction is different, but the ideal is identical. Herbert Spencer tells us that the Absolute Ideal towards which we must all struggle is perfect unselfishness. He acknowledges that it does not seem to him possible to reach it as the world is at present constituted, but our duty is to come as near to it as possible. I recently heard an exponent of utilitarian ethics advocate unselfishness from the basis of the well known law of physics that "action and reaction are equal and opposite." In other words, he urged man not to injure because the recoil would surely injure him, and to do good because it, in return, would come back to the doer. While this does not seem to me the highest ethical standard, it is not a bad motive power for the mind which can most easily apprehend an argument from the point of view of blind force. We do not actually knock our heads against a wall, because after we leave childhood behind, we are able to perceive that we should get the worst of it. But how many of us go on doing so figuratively, all our lives? It is to save us from thus wasting our energies in vain struggle, that Karma Yoga comes to our aid with a method of work that will accomplish the best results. I do not pretend that at first view it is likely to commend itself to western minds, which claim above all things to be practical. The teachings of Karma Yoga will be very likely to appear to us as purely visionary. But if we will conquer our first repugnance and enquire a little more deeply, and above all if we will just practice the teachings a little, we may be surprised at the results. To learn how to work, so that we may pass through duty to a plane beyond duty, is the lesson of Karma Yoga, or the method of realization through work. These yogas are all steps on the way, and the staircase is very long and steep. It has to be climbed, however, by every individual. No elevator ever invented will lift us to realization without effort of our own.

Another method taught by Vedânta as a means of climbing the steps, is called Râja Yoga, or the method of mental control. This is for another group of men, for those who care little for ethical problems, but who find the keenest pleasure in mental analysis, in searching into the hidden workings of human thought and striving to pierce behind the limits of the senses. To the majority of the men of the western world, the idea that man can control the mind instead of being controlled by it, is a comparatively new one. Yet there are many who enjoy studying mental phenomena and modern psychology is really a formulated record of the nervous processes resulting from thought action. The idea that thought and consciousness are products of material bodily processes has rather had the effect of putting things topsy turvy so to speak. The Hindu psychology exactly reversed the process and regarded the molecular changes taking place in the brain as the results of thought, rather than the producers of thought. The subject of mental investigation has always maintained a strong degree of interest for some minds and to them what Vedânta calls Râja or royal yoga, is likely to be interesting. Vedânta, however, never forgets its ultimate purpose, which is to teach mankind how to realize the Self, so in offering Râja Yoga to a certain class of minds, it at the same time insists strongly on the fact that he who pursues this method for anything less than the highest result, is likely to do himself more harm than good. By this is meant, that with more knowledge, subtler temptations come, and while the student may gain a certain amount of knowledge, it will only serve to lead him into error if pursued for its own sake, instead of as a means to the real end of Râja Yoga, which is realization. The "steps" on this "staircase", are possibly steeper than on the one in Karma Yoga. Vedânta declares in terms as positive as those used by Jesus—"Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth to life, and few there be which find it." The Veda says, "The way is very difficult, it is as it were, walking on the blade of a razor." Yet it tells us we have the power to free ourselves and only need sufficient perseverance to accomplish the task.

Yet another of the four main varieties of mankind, those of strongly devotional nature, who want to love and worship, are provided for by the Vedânta in what is known as Bhakti Yoga. The "steps" on this "staircase" are made easy by love. One does not count effort when striving to reach an object ardently beloved. And to help man to love God without fear, he loves Him under different aspects, as friend, as master, as child, as husband. True bhakti has for its object Iswara, and it must be without fear, without bargaining, without looking for personal gain. When her first born is laid in her arms, how fondly does the mother's heart go out to it. What return does she ask? She loves the little one no matter what its defects. Indeed the true mother but loves the more the feeble or deformed little child, who is thereby more dependent upon her. That is the way to love God, just for love's sake, never even thinking of result. That is the kind of love that St. Paul taught, being the only thing of value in the world. It outweighs all gifts, all action, all powers, it is "The fulfilling of the law," it purifies, it blesses and it brings to salvation. The Hindu Bhakta rises to a perfect ecstasy of devotion, where all distinction of lover and beloved is lost in realization of the one, perfect Self.

For the last of the four varieties of men, the philosophers, Gnâna Yoga, or the method of pure reason and knowledge is given by Vedânta. There are some, who must reason and argue everything out, and who are

strong and brave enough to follow the process to its very end. There are many more who think they are rationalists, but when they have travelled a little way on the path of reason, want to stop and rest there, too much appalled by the terrors of the way to dare to proceed. This is the steepest, most inaccessible of all the "staircases," but at the top realization of the Self is to be reached. Hard indeed are the "steps" here. As Swami Vivekananda says, "it is a hard task to be a philosopher."

These are the four principal ways that Vedānta points out to enable men to reach liberation. They are closely interwoven and cannot be absolutely separated. Indeed a man may very easily practice two or more of them at once, and some of each must enter into all. For instance, the worker must love, or he would not want to help his fellow men, and he who loves naturally shows it in his work. The goal of all the yogas is the same and all have to be persistently practiced. Meditation and concentration are needed and therefore a certain amount of mental control must accompany the practice of any of those yogas.

There is a question very often asked, how can a man do all these things when he has to consider the questions of ways and means, has to earn his living and perhaps support a family? If Vedānta were only a religion for such as could give up the world and retire to a cave or a forest, it would not at all deserve the title of universal. So very few even wish to do such a thing, that it would really be unnecessary to work out an elaborate system of procedure for them. But Vedānta earns its right to be considered universal, because it provides a way for every grade of humanity. We ourselves have laid upon ourselves certain duties, and will have to fulfill them, before we can throw them aside, while we seek to follow an easier path. Neither have we got to change our religion, if we have one that is more than a name to us. What Vedānta would say to us is to put life into that religion, to look to the highest ideal it holds up and be satisfied with nothing lower, to faithfully, earnestly follow this ideal and it will in the end lead us to the same goal of realization of the true Self. What Vedānta insists upon is not form, or ceremony or rite of any special kind, but it lays all the emphasis on the underlying motive prompting to these external observances. In and of themselves they are useless. Form for form's sake will never be anything but an empty shell, a mere lifeless imitation of real religious effort. The one thing that must be present is faith. This faith is not blind belief by any means; it is rather what St. Paul describes as "the substance of things hoped for." Such faith is a real religious conviction and is what is awakened in the human heart by one fleeting glimpse of a world beyond the horizon of the senses, or even the mind; it is an impression of the infinite. After this has come to a man and become a genuine force in his life, he will become religious, even if he refuses to accept any existing form of religion. This spirit of true religion often breathes in the writings of great scientific men, to whom an intimate acquaintance with the wonders of Nature brings a revelation of the Infinite. Followers of orthodox religions would no doubt often call these men atheists, because of their inability to accept a traditional view of God, but Vedānta recognizes in such men, the true spirit of religion, and would encourage them to develop their spiritual nature through the methods best adapted for them. Hindu literature teems with examples of men who reached the fullest spiritual illumination through the humblest paths. A faithful performance of even arduous and disagreeable daily tasks, is in no way incompatible with great religious development.

And this has been proved in every form of religion, Christian, Buddhist, Moslem or Brahminical. The lives of great saints in all lands and in all ages, prove that they belonged to every class in life, from beggars to emperors. In every human soul is a spark of that Freedom Absolute, that gives it power to rise above any environment and reach its source, in the realization of its oneness with the Divine. If man were entirely at the mercy of his environment, what would he be but a mere machine? What chance for improvement could ever come to him? The whole history of the human race is the history of man's use of his environment to enable him to rise above it and produce a new environment. In other words, he works in and through law, to finally transcend law. Therefore, be man's conditions what they may, they cannot prevent his effort to be religious, if he has the sincere desire to be so. Let man have to labour as hard as he will, there will be moments when he can lift his thoughts to the great unknown Beyond. Those who have not evolved to the place where they are ready to do this consciously, will be pushed along unconsciously by the great law of development, until they are prepared to consciously co-operate with this law. It is better and easier to go forward consciously and therefore willingly, but progress is inevitable. When man has reached that stage in the great march of evolution where he can see the purpose of it all, he is ready to make much more rapid growth. It is not necessary for him to be able to demonstrate to everybody what that purpose is. It is enough if he himself perceives it, for then he will shape his life in harmony with it. The vast majority of mankind to-day, regard pleasure as the purpose of life, but even that concept has greatly widened out since its first promulgation. The early Hedonists sought individual pleasure, but the more advanced of their modern successors, while still seeking pleasure, have come to comprehend that it cannot be solely of the individual; that it must be the universal pleasure. Altruism recognizing the solidarity of the human race and the impossibility of complete satisfaction for one member of it, at the expense of any of the rest. And the most advanced school of utilitarian ethics makes perfect unselfishness its highest ideal.

Vedānta philosophy teaches a higher purpose than pleasure. It proclaims that the end and aim of all this long and often painful process of development is perfection, and that perfection can only consist in the realization of the Self. As Swami Vivekananda says "Just as in your hymn it is said 'Nearer my God to thee,' the same hymn would be very good to the Vedāntin, only he would change a word and make it—'Nearer my God to me.' The idea that the goal is far off, away beyond nature; attracting us all towards it, has to be brought down nearer and nearer without degrading or degenerating it, until it comes closer and closer, and the God of Heaven becomes the God in Nature till the God in Nature becomes the God who is Nature, and the God who is Nature becomes the God within this temple of the body, and the God living in the temple of the body, becomes the temple itself, becomes the soul and man, and there it reaches the last words it can teach. * * * The ideal of freedom that you perceived was correct, but you projected it outside of yourself, and that was your mistake. Bring it nearer and nearer until you find that it was all the time within you, that it was the Self of your own self. * * * * Then we shall be free. Then and then alone, will all difficulties vanish, then all perplexities of the heart will be smoothed away, all crookedness made straight, then will vanish the delusion of manifoldness and nature; and Maya, instead of being a horrible hope-

less dream as it is now, will become beautiful, and this earth instead of being a prison house as it is now, will become our play-ground and even danger and difficulties, even all sufferings will become deified as it were, and show us their real nature, that behind everything is standing our own real Self."—From the 'Brahmavâdin.'

The Secret of Death—A Story.

In the days of Ananthaguna Pandya who ruled over the Madura kingdom with singular justice, a Brahmin was going with his wife and child from Tiruppettūr to Madura. Owing to the fatigue of the journey, the wife felt thirsty and the Brahmin had to leave her in the cool shade of a tree and himself proceed in search of water. Just then it so happened that an arrow which had sometime back got stuck among the leaves of the tree fell down upon the woman and ended her life. The Brahmin soon brought water, but finding his wife pierced with an arrow and dead, set up a loud wailing and vowed vengeance on the murderer. Looking round him for finding out the culprit, he saw, within a few yards of him, a hunter holding a bow in his hand and with a quiver on his back. At once he ran up to him and seizing him by the arm charged him with murder. But the hunter denied that he was the cause of murder and said that he did not throw any dart either on the tree or on the woman.

The Brahmin, of course, did not believe him, abused him right and left and wanted him to go with him at once to the Pandyan Court.

The innocent hunter readily consented and the Brahmin taking the dead wife on his back and his weeping child in his arms, set out with the hunter to Madura. On reaching the palace gate, he laid down the corpse and set up a tremendous wailing which brought the king himself out of the palace. "O king," said the Brahmin, "had you been just how could my poor wife have been killed in broad day-light by this villainous hunter, who, having doubtless committed the murder, refuses even to admit his guilt? Is this justice? Is this how you rule the country? The Pandyan kingdom so long famous—all over the world—has approached its end through your injustice. The Pandyan fame is tarnished once for ever!" The king appeased the Brahmin's anger saying (kings were different in those days from what they are now), "O best of Brahmins, grieve not: I shall enquire into the case and with Sundareswara's grace find out the truth and do the needful. My injustice is self-proved, for such a horrible deed has been done in broad day-light and so near my capital. I do not deserve to sit on the throne until I fully enquire into the case and get at the truth." Then he addressed the hunter and said, "If you have committed this act, admit it and it will be good for all of us." The hunter said, "My Lord, I am more surprised than your majesty that such an occurrence should have transpired in so justly governed a country as thy Majesty's. Your Majesty is unto us as God Sundareswara himself, and in his presence and yours, I swear I know nothing of the cause of the Brahmin's death." Thereupon the king held a formal enquiry into the circumstances of the case, but he could not come at the truth. He then adjourned the enquiry for a subsequent day, placing the hunter in safe custody, and directed the Brahmin to burn the corpse and perform the necessary funeral ceremonies.

In the evening he went to the temple and mentally laid the whole case before the God of gods, Sundareswara. On returning home, he declined supper and lay on the bare

ground expecting a vision. His penance had the desired effect, for, towards the morning, God appeared to him in his dream and said, "Go this night with the Brahmin to the Chetty's street outside the town. There you will find a house in which marriage will be going on. Entering the house in disguise, remain there in a corner and then you will know the truth about the Brahmin's death." The king rose from his bed satisfied and in the night taking the Brahmin along with him went out disguised as a Chetty, and finding out the marriage house, they both entered into it and sat unobserved in a corner.

Shortly after, they heard voices in the air and looking up found—for they were endued for the occasion by the grace of Sundareswara with celestial vision—that a number of messengers of the God of death had come there and were consulting with one another as to how the life of the bridegroom may be taken away to the abode of Yama. One of them said, "He has no disease, what shall we do?" Another said, "We must try for some contrivance as we did yesterday, by making the arrow, which had long stuck up among the leaves of the tree under which the Brahmin woman was lying, fall upon her and do away with her life." Another said, "We shall likewise contrive to-day to let loose the cow in the yard make it fall upon the bridegroom and put an end to his life." "A very nice contrivance," said a fourth, "for it is very natural that the cow should get excited with the noise of the drums and other musical instruments which are now playing on the pial." "This is even more clever," said another, "than the contrivance of yesterday's by which we made away with the life of the Brahmin woman." The king looked at the Brahmin who was hearing all this and said, "How innocent is the hunter whom we have brought for trial!" The Brahmin said, "Yes even so he is. It was all the work of fate, but we shall watch how these messengers of Yama manage their present work."

Hardly had he finished, when a cow rushed into the house and furiously dashed the bridegroom to the ground and ran away. The poor bridegroom was fatally hurt by the fall and immediately became a corpse. The marriage changed into a funeral and the house was filled with mourners. The Brahmin applauded the king for his justice and the divine grace which through his Punya he had secured, and humbly begged his pardon for his rash accusation and the trouble he had caused him. It is needless to add that the hunter was set free and liberally compensated for the trouble he underwent. The Brahmin also was given by the generous king a large sum of money for marrying again. The details of the case and the divine manner by which the truth was revealed to the king, were proclaimed throughout the kingdom and a public festival celebrated in honour of God Sundareswara.

The above story is an illustration of the truth that behind the apparent causes with which we satisfy our inquisitiveness, there remains a mystery which it is impossible for us to unravel. We may ascribe things to Time, to Fate, or to Karma; but all that does not solve the problem, but only wards off the inquiry. They are not causes, but only apologies for causes. In the question of death, as much as in that of life, there is an authoritative "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." How true the saying

Veil after veil will lift, but there must be
Veil upon veil behind.

After all, however, life and death are only relatively real, and, as the Gita says, he who thinks that one slays another and he that says that one is slain by another

both of them do not know the truth (11. 19). So also the Sruti 'If the slayer thinks I slay, if the slain thinks I am slain, then both of them do not know well (Kath. Up. I, ii, 19). The wise do not grieve either for the living or for the dead.' (Gita, II, 11).

Thoughts on the Bhagavad Gita.

(Continued from page 143).

We have seen that Krishna's advice to Arjuna, instead of being opposed to the doctrine of non-resistance, which has been proclaimed as an ideal in nearly all the countries of the world, is indeed the truest interpretation of it. It was really a bold thing for a teacher of morality, as Krishna was, to advise a man to fight even against his will, and therefore it is no wonder that critics like Bishop Caldwell attacked and censured the Gita with all the vehemence of a foreign Missionary. We have done what we can to show that Krishna is not so bad a teacher as our Christian friends in their ignorance represent him to be and that the great Gita, deservedly called the Song Celestial, is the best key to the scriptures, even of other countries.

The difficulties we had to contend will all vanish and the explanations we had to offer become likewise unnecessary if we call back to our minds the philosophical signification of Krishna and Arjuna. Krishna, as we know represents the Paramatman eternally tutoring, counselling, and guiding the human mind which is symbolised as Arjuna. According to this allegorical or rather philosophical interpretation of the Gita, the advice which was given to fight unmindful of the ties of brother, father, teacher and friend is perfectly legitimate and easily intelligible. Duryodhana and his host represent, as we said, the bad Vrittis, the evil propensities and thoughts of the mind, while the army of the Pandavas and their allies, all stand for those good tendencies, pure Sankalpas and noble thoughts which make for the liberation of the individual. In the battle both the good and the bad Vrittis of the mind have to perish, for Moksha or the seat of final release is absolute rest. "That is the highest state," says the Maitrayani Upanishad, "where all the Vrittis of the mind have perished and where there is neither sleep nor thought." "Let the wise subdue his speech by mind, subdue his mind by intellect, subdue his intellect in the great self and subdue this also in the quiet self." (Kath. Up. III: 13). That the highest state is one of absolute rest where the mind is completely dead, as it were, is well described in the following Sruti. "The wise think that the Fourth which is cognisant of neither internal nor external objects nor of both, which is not a compact mass of knowledge, is neither intelligent nor unintelligent, which is invisible, not acting; incomprehensible, undefinable, incapable of proof and indescribable and which is the sole essence of I-am-ness with no trace of the conditioned world, all calm, all bliss, without duality. This is the Atman; it should be known." (Mand. Upa. 7.)

For attaining to this state, the mind must be completely subdued and all activity has to cease; for action necessarily implies imperfection. "Where there is, as it were, duality, there sees another another thing, there smells another another thing, there tastes another another thing, there speaks another another thing, there hears another another thing, there minds another another thing, there touches another another thing; but how does one, to whom all has become mere soul, see anything, how

smell anything, how speak anything, how hear anything, how mind anything, how touch anything, how know anything?" (Bri. Upa. IV, IV, 15.) Sainthood, says the Gita, is ceasing from all the works. The man therefore who aspires to realise the Atman, in other words, to know himself, which has been described as 'the highest end, the best riches, the supremest world, the greatest joy,' should strictly follow the Upanishadic precept above quoted—"Let the wise subdue his speech by mind, subdue his mind by intellect, subdue his intellect in great self and subdue that also in the quiet self." This holding back of the senses and the mind is what is called Yoga. "The state which ensues when the five organs of knowledge remain with the mind, and intellect does not strive is called the highest aim. When all the desires cease which were cherished in one's heart, then the mortal becomes immortal; then he obtains here (in this world) Brahman. When all the bonds of the heart are broken in this life, then the mortal becomes immortal; this alone is the instruction of all the Vedas." (Ka. Upa. II, VI, 10, 14, 15.) Such ambitions as that of doing good to the world and so on, however good and useful in their own way, are real hindrances in the way of Yoga and therefore have to be subdued with effort. All restlessness is imperfection and shows lost balance. Therefore however good may be the ideas and aspirations that might spring in one's mind, however helpful they may be in the earlier stages of spirit-progress, the endeavour of one who has advanced so far as to long for release from this world of Maya, should be to keep them all down and strive with singleness of aim and intensity of purpose to realise that which is the end of all Karma and whose nature is absolute, blissful and imperishable rest.

Having thus far dwelt upon a difficulty which will not fail to strike the intelligent reader at the very outset and vindicated Krishna from the charge of preaching a dangerous doctrine, let us resume the thread of our 'thoughts' and sketch out, as we proposed, the plan of the Gita. Krishna, we saw, began with giving a philosophical dignity to the problem of Arjuna, and raising it from the plane of narrow practical considerations, he viewed it from the stand-point of the perfected sage. After showing how, from the philosopher's point of view, there was no sin in Arjuna's fighting, he descends to the plane of a Kshatriya and urges his friend to fight and thereby do his caste duty. Then he propounds the philosophy of action and shows how action when performed without caring for its fruits and as a service to the Lord throws open by itself the door to that exalted state of bliss, where man is free for ever from the liability to be played upon by the world. The tact with which Arjuna is made to forget the horre and lose sight of his individual problem is simply admirable, and the question even so early as in the second chapter is no longer, whether it is just or unjust to kill the Kauravas, but what are the marks of a perfected sage, how would he speak, what will he do and how would he behave? (II, 54.) The remainder of the second chapter is taken up with a description of what is known of Sankhya Yoga. Then the question comes "If O Lord thou thinkest that wisdom is better than action, why doest thou counsel me to engage in a horrible deed?" The reply to this question forms the subject of the three subsequent chapters—three, four and five. How action leads to wisdom and how wisdom is supreme from all works, are elaborated in these three chapters with wonderful fullness, so much so, that though the germs of Karma Yoga are found in the Upanishads, the credit may well be said to belong to the Gita more than to anything else, of having thrown open an

almost new path to salvation, which, though by itself not all-sufficient, yet goes a great way towards the end. The mutual relation between the two Yogas, Karma and Gnana is explained in VI, 3, which says that for him who desires Gnana Yoga, Karma Yoga is necessary and for him who has attained the former control of mind is the chief requisite.

(To be continued).

Key to Vedic Worship.

The sages known as Valakhilyas addressing Prajapati said, "O Lord, pray clear our doubt with regard to one point. Of Fire, Air, Sun, Prana, Food, Brahma and Vishnu, some worship one and others another; but who of these is the highest? He who in thy opinion is the highest, we shall also regard as the highest." "Fire and others," replied Prajapati, "are the chief forms of the great indestructible and bodiless Brahman; of these every man in this world worships that which he likes best. All these gods are Brahman. They form the chief bodies of Brahman. They should be meditated upon as Brahman. They should be worshipped as Brahman. They should be regarded not as gods but as the highest Brahman. He who worships them in this way becomes one with them and attains higher and higher regions. In the end when the world ceases to exist for him (by the intensity of his devotion), he becomes one with the Atman."

"The following," Prajapati continued, "is the prayer which Kutsayana made,—Thou art Brahma; Thou art Vishnu; Thou art Rudra; Thou art Prajapati; Thou art Agni; Thou art Varuna; Thou art Vayu; Thou art Indra; Thou art the Moon; Thou art Food; Thou art Yama; Thou art the Earth; Thou art the whole Universe; Thou art Indestructible. This world depends on Thee for (securing) the ends of life and for its nature. Prostration to Thee who art the Lord of all. Thou appearest as the universe. Thou art He who made this world. Thou absorbest this world (in the end). Thou art the life of this universe. Thou art the Lord of all enjoyments internal and external. Thou art the placid Atman. Prostration to Thee. Prostration to Thee, who art the greatest secret. Prostration to Thee that art unthinkable, boundless, and without either beginning or end."

—(From the Maitrayani Upanishad).

Elements of the Vedanta.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SELF IN US.

We proposed in the last chapter to proceed to discuss the nature of Brahman; but, on second thought, it appears desirable to add a few more words to what has already been said with regard to the changelessness of the Atman. Those who have followed our treatment of the subject with patience will remember our analysis of the mind or the inner man. Every act of the mind, we said, involves five different functions —those of Manas, Intellect, Will, Ahankara and Sakshi or witness. The last of these, we observed, should be changeless, being the necessary background of the constantly varying states of mind.

The question has been asked, both in our country and elsewhere, if this witness should necessarily be change-

less. A particular school of Buddhistic philosophers, known by the name of *Kshanika Vignâna Vâdins* assert for instance that the 'I' in us is not a changeless entity, but simply a series of cognitions or ideas referring to the ego, called in their philosophy *Alaya-Vignana*. There is another series, they say, consisting of ideas referring to external objects such as colour and the like, and this series is called by them *Pravritti-Vignana*. Both the series are said to exist side by side with each other and the first is said to be the cause of the second. According to this school then, not merely are our ideas changing but also the knower, the 'I'.

This position has been ably refuted by that eminent champion of Vedic Monism, the great Sankaracharya in his *Sûtra Bâshya*. In commenting upon *Vedânta Sûtra* II, 2, 25. Sankara says, "And on account of remembrance the philosopher who maintains that all things are momentary only would have to extend that doctrine to the perceiving person (Upalabdhi) also; that is however not possible on account of the remembrance which is consequent on the original perception. That remembrance can take place only if it belongs to the same person who previously made the perception. For we observe that what one man has experienced is not remembered by another man. How indeed could there arise the conscious state expressed in the sentences, 'I saw that thing and now I see this thing,' if the seeing person were not in both cases the same? That the consciousness of recognition takes place only in the case of the observing and the remembering subject being one and the same, is a matter known to every one; for if there were in the two cases different subjects, the state of consciousness arising in the mind of the remembering person would be, I remember another person made the observation, but no such state of consciousness does arise. When, on the other hand, such a state of consciousness does arise, then every body knows that the person who made the original observation and the person who remembers are different persons and then the state of consciousness is expressed as follows: 'I remember, that that other person saw that and that.' In the case under discussion however, the Vainasika himself—whose state of consciousness is 'I saw that and that'—knows that there is one thinking subject only to which the original perception as well as the remembrance belongs, and does not think of denying that the past perception belonged to himself, not any more than he denies that fire is hot and gives light.... We admit that sometimes with regard to an external thing a doubt may arise whether it is that or is merely similar to that. For mistake may be made concerning what lies outside our minds, but the conscious subject never has any doubt whether it is itself or only similar to itself. It rather is distinctly conscious that it is one and the same subject, which yesterday had a certain sensation and to-day remembers that sensation."

Referring to the question of impermanent self, Vyasa says in *Sûtra* II, 2, 31, "And on account of the momentariness of the *Alaya-Vignana*, it cannot be the abode of mental impressions." In his comment on this *Sûtra*, Sankara observes, "Unless there exists one continuous principle equally connected with the past, the present and the future, in other words, an absolutely unchangeable self which cognizes everything, we are unable to account for remembrance, recognition and so on, which are subject to mental impressions dependent on place, time and cause."

Another argument for proving the existence of a changeless, witnessing self is that ideas are not self-illuminating and require something else to apprehend them. "By maintaining the idea to be illuminated by itself, you

make yourself," says Sankara, " guilty of an absurdity no less than if you said that fire burns itself." He adds, " If you maintain that the idea, lamp-like, manifests itself without standing in need of a further principle to illuminate it, you maintain thereby that ideas exist which are not apprehended by any of the means of knowledge and which are without a knowing being, which is no better than to assert that a thousand lamps burning inside some impenetrable mass of rocks manifest themselves. And if you should maintain that we admit your doctrine, since it follows from what we have said that the idea itself implies consciousness, we reply that, as observation shows, the lamp in order to become manifest requires some other intellectual agent furnished with instruments, such as the eye, and that therefore the idea also as equally being a thing to be illuminated becomes manifest only through an ulterior intelligent principle. And if you finally object that we, when advancing the witnessing self as self-proved, merely express in other words the Buddha tenet that the idea is self-manifested, we refute you by remarking that your ideas have the attributes of originating, passing away, being manifold and so on, while our self is one and permanent."

We have thus seen that the real 'I' in us is a changeless factor. The existence of such a changeless entity is inferrible from our fleeting mental states and cognitions, though its best proof is the realisation of the Maha Vakya (a great saying) ' I am Brahman.' This much however we can understand with the help of our feeble reason, that that entity being changeless is infinite and eternal; also, for the fact of its transcending space and time is involved in the very idea of changelessness. Change is possible only in space and time and everything in space and time undergoes, as we see, constant change. The Atman being changeless is therefore infinite and eternal, and from this, it necessarily follows, as we have already seen, that Manas, Intellect, Will and Ahankara are all of them mere illusory modifications of that A'tman and that all that exists, all these innumerable worlds, these suns and moons and stars are only apparently different from the infinite A'tman whose nature is Pragnana. 'Where one sees nothing else, hears nothing else, understands nothing else, that is the Infinite,' says the Chandogya Upanisad (VIII. xxiv, 1). 'Whoever sees variety in Him proceeds from death to death' (Bri. Upa. IV, iv, 19). 'The A'tman is Adwaitam,' i.e., without (the three) distinctions,' says the Mandukya Upanishad. 'He is without parts, without action, tranquil,' says Svetaswetara.

That the A'tman is attributeless and undefinable is well expressed in the following Srnti, ' This Self is not this, nor aught else. It is unseizable, for it cannot be seized. It is not scattered, for it cannot be scattered. It is without contact, for it comes not into contact. It is without color, it is not subject to pain or destruction' (IV. v, 15). 'Where does that Infinity abide, my Lord,' asked Narada of Sanatkumara. The sage replied, ' It abideth in its own glory or (if you enquire where is that glory, I say, it doth not abide in its glory.' (Ch. Upa. VII. xxiv, 1).

The realisation of the unity expressed in such statements as ' Verily the Self is all this' is the one purpose for which the Upanishads were revealed to mankind. 'He who is aware of this (i.e., the Self extending from above, below and everywhere),' says Sanatkumara, ' seeing the Self thus, thinking it thus, and knowing it thus, becomes one whose entire devotion is to the Self, whose recreation is in the Self, whose felicity is the Self, he becomes self-resplendent. He is able to accomplish whatever he desires in all the regions of the universe. Those who be-

lieve otherwise having others for their masters go to perishable regions. For them nothing is accomplished in any of the regions of the universe.'

'Such is the glory of the A'tman who is to be heard and thought upon, and known'

All old man and Sri-Krishna.

There was once a certain old Brahmin who professed to be a great Bhakta; whatever he did, he used to say, ' Krishna, Krishna, this is thy doing.' One day some paddy had been spread at his door for getting dried in the sun, when a cow came and ate it. The Brahmin at once took a stick in his hand and severely beat the poor cow, which consequently fell down and expired. At once, the Brahmin began to exclaim, 'Hari-Hari-Krishna-Krishna. This is thy doing.' Just then Rukmani happened to be with Krishna and she addressing her Lord said, ' O my Lord what a sin has now fallen to your account.' Krishna replied, ' Fear not, my dear, the sin of having killed the cow is the Brahmin's and not mine. You will shortly see how it is so.'

A few days after, the old man was giving a feast to Brahmins; when Krishna, assuming the guise of a dirty old Brahmin, entered his house, spat on the ground here and there and committed diverse kinds of nuisance. The host thereupon began to rebuke him saying, ' Is this the reward for my charity? Why do you come and disturb the feast which I am holding?' The disguised Krishna replied, ' Who are you to rebuke me? Are you the real host?' The Brahmin got exceedingly angry and said, ' Did I not tell you that I was the host?' I will show you who I am'; and so saying, he began to shove him out. At once Krishna showed his real form and said, ' The merit of this feast is yours, while the sin of killing the cow is mine I suppose. A very fair division to be sure. 'Let both be yours', and so saying he disappeared.

Like the Brahmin in this story, how often are we prone to take the merit of our successes and good deeds to ourselves, while ascribing our failures and evil deeds to the Lord.

Review.

The Dawn, No. 3. (Calcutta):—We are again in a position to express our warm appreciation of the spirit and scope of this new Religious and Philosophical Magazine. The article on Vedānta Sutras exposes an important error in Dr. Thibaut's exposition, and proves that "the important discrepancy" discovered by him between the views of the great ancient teachers Andulomi and Jaimini in regard to Brahman does not exist at all. The writer points out how the Sutrakara reconciles the seeming contradiction. "The Situation in India" gives a clear analysis of the conflict of ideals and civilisations in India and the conditions under which alone Indian civilisation can hold its own against the invasion of Western Social and Ethical standards. The article on "Appearance and Reality" is a statement of the doctrine of the Samskaras and the Realisation of the Absolute. The introduction to Sri Sankara's *Tatradvada* promises well, and the first instalment of the translation of *Svarajyasyaiddhi* is instructive. It was a splendid idea of the conductors to include in the Magazine passages descriptive of Brindavana Scenes. Sri Krishna and his Lila are enshrined in the hearts of all Hindus in a way altogether without parallel in human history; and these bewitching Sanskrit verses are calculated to touch the most tender chords in the Bhakta's heart. We hope the succeeding numbers will maintain the present standard of excellence.